WORKING MEN'S COLLEGE BUILDING FUND.

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no. 807

STATEMENT BY THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

45, Great Ormond Street.

The friends of the Working Men's College will be glad to learn that we have now begun the erection of the proposed New Buildings; the work has been delayed some time, as it proved more difficult than was at first expected to raise the requisite funds. The money in hand, however, being about sufficient to allow of the erection of an important part of the proposed buildings (the Class Rooms), it has been thought right at once to proceed with this part of the plan. There will be six of these rooms; the four smaller will be 30 feet by 23 feet, one 33 feet by 25 feet, and another 33 feet by 34 feet. They will be finished it is hoped in time for the opening of the College year in October next, and will then give accommodation to the Art Classes which have so long suffered extreme inconvenience and discomfort from want of proper studios and will temporarily afford a place for the Museum and the Natural Science Classes. The Museum, which comprises a number of excellent Scientific Collections, is at present in a cramped little room upon the second floor, where it is impossible to arrange its contents properly, or to exhibit them at all. The appropriation of a Room in the New Building to Natural Science will make it possible to carry on a Chemistry Class, which it has hitherto been impossible to do satisfactorily, though we have had no lack of excellent teachers. The rooms on the floor to be vacated by the Art Department will be available for the needs of the other departments, in which deficiency of space has constantly been a hindrance to class arrangements. The erection of the Class Rooms, though only a first instalment of the whole design, will thus be a most important aid to the efficiency of the College, meeting at once the most pressing wants. For the permanent Museum and the Hall, both of which are very much needed, we must wait till the remaining funds have been got together.

The contract now is for £1,720, but the cost of furnishing and fittings, Architect's charges and contingent extras will probably make the actual cost about £2,000. We must therefore ask those who are interested in the College to do their best towards collecting the additional funds thus immediately needed and towards procuring the means for carrying out the complete designs for which an additional sum of about £2,000 will be required.

The College is financially in a good position, and it is only to meet this Capital Expenditure that it has need to ask pecuniary help. The experience of 15 years has shewn that its regular income from fees is more than sufficient to meet its current expenses, the teaching it will be remarked being almost wholly unpaid, and the rental produced by No. 44, Great Ormond-street (the possession of which has given us the site now being covered) is reducing the mortgage debt regularly year by year.

1864

On this state of facts we appeal confidently to those interested in such work for the money help which is needed. If the means of getting a liberal education are to be placed within the reach of the working men of London, it must be at present on some such plan as ours. No existing and no proposed plan of State action meets the case. No endowment is available; nor are we anxious to secure that form of assistance.

Before long we hope that it will be quite unnecessary that teaching such as we give should be unpaid. Meanwhile, our volunteer work, though imperfect in many ways, has had some success, a success which is itself the cause of the present appeal. As volunteer work too, it has been more significant of the object we have in view, that of "uniting members of different classes by associating them in the "common work of teaching and learning." Our Students have shewn by their contributions their wish to share in the effort now making, as they have shared in the work of teaching. There exists indeed among them, and among the Students of former years, now helping in various kinds of College work, a spirit of fellowship, attachment, and sympathy with the College, which assures us that the work which its founders have been able to do, will be carried on with vigour when they relinquish it. But this fair promise can scarcely be fulfilled till we are put in possession of the chief material requisite, a proper and sufficient Building.

(SEE OTHER SIDE.)

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